

**Listing and Amendments of Claims**  
**Including Status Indicators**

1. - 4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently amended) A binding machine comprising:

a reel, said reel being adapted to receive a band thereon;

a handle, said handle being coupled to said reel, said handle being adapted to receive an applied torque and to transmit said applied torque to said reel, whereby said reel rotates to receive said band; and

a torque indicator, said torque indicator being adapted to indicate a specific magnitude of said applied torque by a deflection of a portion of said handle, said deflection increasing in relation to an increase in said magnitude.

6. (Previously presented) A binding machine as defined in claim 5 wherein said torque indicator comprises:

a handle extension, said handle extension being pivotally coupled to said handle; and

a spring, said spring having a first end coupled to said handle and a second end coupled to said handle extension whereby a deflection of said spring indicates a magnitude of said applied torque.

7. (Previously presented) A binding machine as defined in claim 6 wherein said handle comprises a first side member and a second side member and wherein said handle extension includes a third side member and a fourth side member, said first and third side members having respective first and second apertures therein, said first and second apertures being disposed about a first end of a pin

roll, said second and fourth side members having respective third and fourth apertures therein, said third and fourth apertures being disposed about a second end of said pin roll such that said third and fourth side members are adapted to pivot with respect to said first and second side members about said pin roll.

8. (Previously presented) A binding machine as defined in claim 7 wherein said spring comprises a helical spring, said helical spring having a longitudinal axis disposed substantially parallel to a longitudinal axis of said pin roll, said helical spring having an internal circumference, said pin roll being disposed within said internal circumference of said helical spring.

9. (Previously presented) A binding machine as defined in claim 5 further comprising:

- a body member having an aperture therethrough, said reel being supported within said aperture;

- a ratchet, said ratchet being coupled to said reel;

- a pawl, said pawl being coupled to said body member, said pawl being adapted to control a motion of said ratchet.

10. (Previously presented) A binding machine as defined in claim 9 comprising: a further band, said further band being coupled to said body member, whereby said body member may be disposed in tension between said band and said further band by application of said applied torque.

11. (Currently amended) A binding machine as defined in claim 5 wherein said torque indicator includes a spring, said spring being adapted to deflect through a

particular angle when said specific magnitude of said torque corresponds to an operational tension of said band.

12. (New) A binding machine comprising:

- a body portion;

- a ratchet device coupled to said body portion;

- a first handle portion including first and second side members, said first and second side members be disposed in substantially parallel spaced relation with respect to one another, said first handle portion being coupled to said ratchet device for rotational activation of said ratchet device;

- a second handle portion including third and fourth side members, said third and fourth side members being disposed in substantially parallel spaced relation with respect to one another, said second handle portion being pivotally coupled to said first handle portion at respective mutually proximate ends thereof;

- a helical spring, said helical spring being disposed between said first and second side members, said helical spring being adapted to provide a monotonically increasing force in opposition to a pivotal displacement of said first second handle portion with respect to said second handle portion.

13. (New) A binding machine as defined in claim 12 further comprising:

- a further helical spring, said further helical spring being disposed between said first and second side members, said helical spring and said further helical spring being wound in opposite directions.

14. (New) A binding machine as defined in claim 12 wherein said helical spring includes a first end portion and a second end portion, said first end portion being substantially fixedly coupled to said first handle portion and said second end portion being substantially fixedly coupled to said second handle portion.

15. (New) A binding machine as defined in claim 12 wherein said first, second, third and fourth side members include respective first, second, third and fourth through-holes, said first, second, third and fourth through-holes being disposed coaxially with respect to one another about a longitudinal axis of a shaft, said shaft being adapted to effect said pivotal coupling of said second handle portion to said first handle portion.

16. (New) A binding machine as defined in claim 15 wherein a coil of said helical spring is disposed coaxially about said shaft.

17. (New) A binding machine as defined in claim 16 wherein a flexure of said helical spring is adapted to exert a substantially negligible torsional force on said shaft.

18. (New) A binding machine as defined in claim 12 further comprising an inner cross member, said inner cross member having a first end coupled to said first side member and a second end coupled to said second side member, said helical spring having a first end coupled to said inner cross member.

19. (New) A binding machine as defined in claim 18 wherein said inner cross member includes a bore, said bore being disposed substantially perpendicular to

a longitudinal axis of said inner cross member, said first end being disposed within said bore.

20. (New) A binding machine as defined in claim 18 further comprising an outer cross member, said outer cross member having a third end coupled to said third side member and a fourth end coupled to said fourth side member, said helical spring having a second end coupled to said outer cross member.

21. (New) A binding machine as defined in claim 20 wherein said outer cross member includes circumferential groove in a surface thereof, and wherein said second end of said helical spring includes a hooked portion, said hooked portion being disposed within said circumferential groove.

22. (New) A ratchet belt tension device, said ratchet belt tension device comprising:

a drive handle, said drive handle having a first portion with a first longitudinal axis and a second portion with a second longitudinal axis, said first portion being adapted to deflect in relation to said second portion; and

a helical spring, said helical spring having a first end coupled to said first portion and a second end coupled to said second portion, wherein said helical spring is adapted to urge said first longitudinal axis into a substantially coplanar relation with respect to said second longitudinal axis, whereupon said first portion deflects in relation to said second portion an amount related to a tensioning state of said ratchet belt tension device.